

CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND DIVISION

ANNUAL REPORT -- 1965

A YEAR OF TRANSITION

The year 1965 brought to a close the career of a devoted librarian who had served the blind readers of Northern Ohio since 1938, and as Head of the Division since 1951. Miss Helen Sheffield retired on May 1st and the multitude of calls and letters received since attest to the confidence of these readers in her ability, and to the relationship of tried friendship. She will be missed for a long time. That the service to readers has continued fundamentally unchecked is a tribute to the experience and determined hard work of the staff of the Library for the Blind, and also to the support and guidance of the supervisor, Miss Clara E. Luciola, Head of the Hospital and Institutions Department, Cleveland Public Library.

A new Regional Librarian was appointed, effective June 16th, Miss Katherine Prescott. Her experience had been in the branch libraries of the Cleveland Public Library system, and the last 15^{1/2} as Branch Librarian. The first step for her has been to learn the organization and ramifications of the work. In this she has been tremendously aided, not only by library colleagues, but by almost everyone. The opportunities are so large that there is a wonderful spirit of helpfulness and realism that is shared by blind persons and those who know them.

There is a close, almost daily, interrelationship, not only with the Division for the Blind of the Library of Congress, but also with the United States Postal Service, the Ohio State Division of Services for the Blind, the Cleveland Society for the Blind, and the Braille Service, American Red Cross, Greater Cleveland Chapter. There are many other cooperating organizations, chief of which are: the Sight Saving Division of the Cleveland Board of Education, the American Foundation for the Blind, and the American Printing House for the Blind. Individuals write and call, too; nurses, clergymen, public librarians, teachers, social workers, neighbors, landladies, friends and relatives, and best of all, our readers.

READERS - PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF SERVICE - COMMENTS AND REACTION

The most frequent question asked by general librarians is,

"Don't you miss the contact with readers?"

This depends upon what is meant by contact. Physical presence? Then the answer is yes, for the physical independence needed to accomplish a trip downtown to the library is such that this is possible only for persons in good health, thoroughly trained and experienced in mobility, or who have someone to accompany them. How doubly welcome then are those hardy patrons who do come, whose visits average 2 to 6 a day. Some come regularly as they are out so much they cannot be home to accept parcel post delivery. For others a trip to the library is a big event, a chance to browse along the Braille book shelves, to visit with the staff or, for some children, a learning experience carefully planned by their families.

But physical presence is not necessarily contact. On second thought, any librarian in the public service knows that he never gives personal service to more than a certain proportion of the persons who borrow books each day. The volume of circulation of books from the Library for the Blind, over 143,000 in 1965, is impressive when one recollects that each one has been individually picked and recorded by the library staff. Some of these have been chosen from lists sent in by patrons, but many have been selected on the basis of knowledge of a reader's tastes. Moreover, each selection must be recorded, for when readers do not come in person, this is the only way not to send duplicates, the bane of both readers and library staff.

Blind readers react to books and librarians every day of the week. Older people often write when a book has struck a sympathetic chord that reverberates through the memories of earlier days. Since they usually hate to criticize, most complaints begin with an expression of appreciation. One woman who sends a card every time she sends back a book finally read one she did not enjoy. She wrote,

"This has been a hard book for me to read. I sent for it because I thought I would like to know something more about Indians. Well, now I do."

She is 89. An active man wrote when he sent in a list,

"I marked a few with the very good Reader's Digest, Changing Times, Newsweek and Dialogue. I know I will have a pleasant time, as in the summer I try to get outside and work around the place, and like to listen to ball games."

A high school boy liked Tom Sawyer because "that mother touch was enjoyable." He asked for magazines about "what goes on in the streets" -- not politics nor economics. An older man who lives in public housing was overjoyed with the gift of a recorded Bible. His first attempt at listening to it had been at the wrong speed. He complained that it was a "kid's record, like Punch and Judy." Then he called again, putting the telephone by his record player so the staff could hear it, too. He said he was lying in bed with his talking book machine on one side and his tape recorder on the other. The next day he came in with an orange tree plant he had brought home from camp, as a gift.

A child who had been to camp wanted a record of bird songs when she came home.

A musician needed to have the music and instructions of a Hammond Organ teaching manual taped so that she could teach her sighted pupils.

A man writes of Finding my way, by Borghild Dahl,

"I enjoyed this book and admire the author for her courage and open acceptance of blindness. It was an interesting story and of practical help to me in solving a few of the problems of daily living."

A boy of 14 with the additional handicap of cerebral palsy and who had had limited understanding, enjoyed A man called Peter. His Mother reported that he had suddenly come to life and could now hold his attention for 5 hours.

A new borrower wrote,

"I would enjoy two books a month. I think the service which is offered to people having difficulty with vision is just wonderful, and I appreciate it no end. It is like a new world being opened for me."

An elderly Negro man, 77 years of age, came in and took home six books on health, commenting that he was "making up for all the schooling I've missed." A housewife returning the hand-copied edition of Luchow's German Cookbook said she'd enjoyed it so much that she felt as if she were returning a part of herself. Another said she'd always wanted her very own cook book. Another woman wrote,

"I especially appreciate that I now receive Newsweek so promptly! It's quite a thrill to be almost current on the news."

There are complaints, of course, although less gratifying. They, too, help the Library to adapt service to individual readers, and to catch up again with people who have been overlooked. These are typical,

"I have not had a book for two weeks."

"Are you trying to bury me? I can't possibly read all the books you send."

"I never read such a dull book as _____!"

The immediacy of this communication and the usefulness and enlightenment found in books is so great, that the relationship between staff and readers is a warm and crucial one, to which the staff respond with respect and admiration. Correspondence with our readers about their wishes, even though primarily by post card, is developing that dialogue which is the basis for all good library service. Many more talking book readers have been sending in lists of books they wish to read. Braille readers, too, have been making more specific requests. Catalogs of available braille books have been sent again to readers, to perhaps 100 so far.

For some the service does not appeal. Listening to talking books requires some concentration and reasonably good hearing. There are always some new readers who find the talking book machine difficult to run, others who are ill and need assistance which is not always forthcoming. And some who did not read when they had sight are no more interested now.

PROCEDURES

A beginning has been made in following up readers who have become inactive. A form letter, either in print or in braille, has had excellent results, and has enabled the Library to discover many difficulties.

The number of readers increases each year and in 1965 there were 2,978 active Ohio readers, of whom 187 were under 14 years of age. Of these, 2,887 read talking books, and 324 read braille. Adding the figures together shows that 223 read both!

Forty-one additional persons were served temporarily, either as visitors or while undergoing eye surgery. There were also 39 persons living outside the district who received hand-copied braille books.

The circulation rose at an even faster rate and amounted to 143,105 books and magazines. This year a new magazine Farm Journal, was added; and Sports Illustrated became a weekly instead of a monthly with a change in boxing. The demand for Good Housekeeping, American Heritage, and News of the Week far exceeds the supply. All this increase created such a volume of work that it became imperative to simplify methods.

Several modifications in circulation procedures and the sequence of operations were made that have enabled us to get more books to the readers in less time. The circulation figures show that there has been an increase of 14,373 over 1964. We considered discontinuing the examination of returned books, but this was not necessary. Consequently, we were able to reassemble books with missing records and clear up many of the inevitable mixups that occur. However, magazines are no longer revised, saving a good deal of time, although causing inconvenience and unpleasantness to some readers. A simpler system of assigning braille magazines has sent current issues to readers more quickly.

Another way of saving time has been to use the addressograph plates instead of typing many readers' records. Staff members have made a great many good suggestions that have been adopted. Yet it is important that further progress be made in work simplification, for the pressure of work is still extremely severe.

STAFF

Fortunately the staff is experienced, and their steady work and the responsibility carried by Mrs. Blanche Rich, First Assistant, have brought the Division through the transitional period. A second important staff change was the departure of Mr. Csaba Rozsa to Ohio State University in Columbus for his final years of college. He was in charge of magazines, and this position is now filled by Mr. Gerald Rarick. The shipping job is done by part-time pages and clerical aides, most of them quick and energetic young men in high school and college. Those who have been with the Division for several years have developed a remarkable standard of output and efficiency. There have been several Neighborhood Youth Corps workers assigned to the Library for the Blind, and they have made a very worthwhile contribution.

The Conference of Regional Librarians for the Blind, October 3-7, held by the Library of Congress in Louisville, Kentucky, in cooperation with the American Printing House for the Blind, was a helpful overview of library service to the blind. Both the Division Head and the First Assistant were able to attend, and gained a great deal from the Conference sessions and informal discussions with other librarians. The Head of Hospital and Institutions Department and the Division Head also learned much from their visits to three other libraries for the blind; Lansing and Wayne County, Michigan, during the American Library Association Conference in Detroit; and at Cincinnati during the Ohio Library Association Conference. Their librarians were most helpful.

VOLUNTEERS

Invaluable service has been given by volunteers. Of first importance is the work of the Volunteer Braille Service of the Greater Cleveland Chapter of the American Red Cross. A list of the hand-copied braille books added to the library collection in 1965 is appended. In addition, the chairman, Mrs. Madge Snyder and Mrs. Phyllis Stone both averaged a day a week at the library. They have taken charge of the textbook service; preparing books for circulation, shipping them out, organizing the records and handling the correspondence. Mrs. Stone, a professional librarian, also assisted with cataloguing and revision in cooperation with Mrs. Jean Carr of the Hospital Division who does this basic work. Mrs. Snyder played an invaluable part in the Library's Book Week program described later in this report. She promoted gifts to the Library for the Blind, money for the Krebs binders needed for hand-copied braille books, and a thermoform machine.

A number of individuals have helped as well. The persons who gave so much time to record books on soundsciber discs are listed in the appendix. This is a service essential to students when basic material is available from no other source. It parallels in function the service provided by the Braille Service of the American Red Cross, but needs to be organized and developed. This is a type of service that must be planned for well in advance of the time when the material is to be needed, since at least a month or two is required to reproduce a book, and copyright clearance takes a long time as well.

The community service program of Dyke College arranges for their students to give 30 hours of volunteer work. A young man, William Galardi, worked at the Library in the fall, opening up a new source of volunteer assistance, and doing a good job.

NEW EQUIPMENT AND GIFTS

The two most important pieces of new equipment came from sources outside the Library. An anonymous donor gave a thermoform machine valued at \$450.00. This machine reproduces braille writing at the rate of three minutes a page. It has been used for book lists and form letters, and is a significant gift that opens up new possibilities for communication with readers.

The Cleveland Society for the Blind has lent a braille writer for the season until it is needed again at Highbrook Lodge. This, too, has been well used. Mr. Cleo Dolan, Executive Director, has also been responsible for gifts of Krebs binders and thermoform paper, making possible the addition of many volumes of hand-copied braille to the Library's book collection.

Other gifts are listed in the appendix, including the contribution of our indefatigable staff member, Miss Constance Hurlbut, who raised \$93.00 for the work of the Library by selling 600 Flower Show tickets.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND PUBLICITY

Several good newspaper articles drew attention to the service. Another featured a gift of braille books to a blind student in Pakistan. Gifts of older magazines have been sent to schools and training centers in Ireland. A personal touch was added when the daughter of a staff member, Mrs. Gladys Miller, visited St. Mary's School for the Blind in Dublin last summer, and herself saw the great need there for braille material.

A unique opportunity came when Mr. William Matthews included services to the handicapped in the distinguished film Challenge of Change that he produced for the University of Pittsburgh. His mother had at one time used the services of the Cleveland Library for the Blind. As a result of this experience, he photographed blind readers using braille and a talking book machine, and also another sequence illustrating the Service to Shut-ins.

The high spot of the year was the celebration of Children's Book Week. It was a joint project of the Library for the Blind, the Cleveland Society for the Blind, and the Greater Cleveland Chapter of the American Red Cross. It took place on Saturday, November 6, the last day of Book Week and just preceding the city-wide Children's Book Fair. It required many weeks of preparation by all three organizations. There were 36 legally blind children who met in the reading room of the Hospital and Institutions Department. They were from the braille classes, first through sixth grade, from four greater Cleveland schools: Roosevelt, Anthony Wayne, Forrest and East Shore. Most children brought a parent along, and the transportation was arranged by the Red Cross. Invitations and releases were taken care of by Miss Patricia Stone, Coordinator of Children's Services, Cleveland Society for the Blind, who also helped in the planning of the program all along the way.

The program opened when Joseph Veliconia, aged seven, "sang out for books," reading a braille copy of the book week poem on that theme, with gusto. Mr. Jacques P. Lusseyran spoke directly and simply from his own experience of the power of the imagination to make life vivid and joyous. Helga Sandburg told of her father and sang folk songs to the accompaniment of her guitar. Beautiful and sweet smelling flowers were given for the occasion by the Greater Cleveland Florists Association.

After this, the children spent the rest of the morning touring the library, leafing through books on display, and then exploring up and down the library stacks. Most of them left requests for books they wanted to read.

In preparation for the program, the Braille Service of the Red Cross, headed by Mrs. Madge Snyder, had transcribed about 40 children's books and made a list of them for each child. They also made a braille story book for each child to keep, various chapters from the book Animals do the strangest things. Student volunteers made fanciful textured book marks. And then after the program at the Library, there was a gay luncheon at the Canteen of the American Red Cross, prepared by the Canteen Service and at which the "Volunteens" helped serve. Many volunteer services of the Red Cross were involved, coordinated by Mrs. Betty Thomas. As a surprise climax of a wonderful day, Arts Unlimited of the Junior League of Cleveland, Inc. gave stuffed animals that represented the characters in the gift books. This library day for blind children was a "first" in Cleveland. It was a great day for everyone who shared in the fun and excitement. It also brought home as nothing else could the dynamic significance of books and library service to blind readers.

The other day a high school student expressed this significance in another way. He had written to ask for David Copperfield. Let him have the last word.

"There have been times when I would have, and almost did, miss meals just to sit and listen to books. Again, I express my gratitude and hope that I will remain one of your "customers" for many years to come."

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine Prescott

Katherine Prescott
Regional Librarian for the Blind

BRAILLE AND TALKING BOOK READERS - DECEMBER 1965

	<u>Adult</u>	<u>Juvenile</u>	<u>Total</u>
Talking Book	2,520	134	2,654
Braille	92	9	101
Talking Book and Braille	<u>179</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>223</u>
TOTAL REGISTERED READERS	2,791	187	2,978
Temporary	41		41
Out of district	<u>39</u>		<u>39</u>
Grand Total	2,871	187	3,058
 % Cuyahoga County	 30.5		
% Juvenile readers	6.2		

CIRCULATION OF BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

Total	1965	134,754	8,351	143,105
	1964	<u>120,831</u>	<u>7,901</u>	<u>128,732</u>
	Increase	13,923	450	14,373
 Talking Book		124,165	5,467	129,632
Braille		10,589	2,884	13,473
 Magazines, Talking book	1965			44,727
	1964			<u>36,810</u>
	Increase			7,917
 " Braille	1965	2,904	897	3,801
	1964	<u>2,572</u>	<u>863</u>	<u>3,435</u>
	Increase	332	34	366

CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND DIVISION

Active borrowers during 1965 distributed by Counties in Ohio

Allen	36	Hardin	6	Paulding	4
Ashland	13	Harrison	9	Portage	29
Ashtabula	41	Henry	7	Putnam	10
Auglaize	6	Holmes	4	Richland	64
Belmont	26	Huron	26	Sandusky	17
Carroll	2	Jefferson	28	Seneca	31
Champaign	7	Knox	19	Shelby	9
Clark	14	Lake	57	Stark	125
Columbiana	46	Licking	32	Summit	182
Coshocton	18	Logan	15	Trumbull	56
Crawford	22	Lorain	85	Tuscarawas	37
Cuyahoga	936	Lucas	214	Union	9
Darke	9	Madison	10	Van Wert	4
Defiance	9	Mahoning	118	Wayne	26
Delaware	12	Marion	18	Williams	13
Erie	22	Medina	21	Wood	29
Franklin	334	Mercer	6	Wyandot	20
Fulton	7	Miami	11	Out of district	39
Geauga	20	Morrow	7		
Guernsey	12	Muskingum	33		
Hancock	27	Ottawa	9	Total	3,058